

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Docket: EPA-HQ-OAR-2021-0257

**June 2, 2021 Public Hearing on EPA's Reconsideration
of Previous Administration's Withdrawal of California's Waiver to Enforce
Advanced Clean Cars Standards**

**Testimony of Laura Kate Bender, National Assistant Vice President for Healthy Air
American Lung Association**

Good morning. I'm Laura Kate Bender, National Assistant Vice President for Healthy Air at the American Lung Association. Our mission is to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. Thank you for your time today.

You've already heard from my colleagues today about the health impacts of vehicle emissions and of climate change, the successful track record of state authority driving clean air progress nationwide, and the continued need in California for stronger standards and cleaner cars. What I'm here to focus on today is the breadth of the support of the health community for restoring California's authority and for driving the nation's transition to zero-emission vehicles.

You've heard from other health organizations and health professionals here today, and there are many, many more across the country who support strong steps to reduce vehicle emissions to protect the health of their patients and communities. That's because action to address vehicle pollution and climate change is a health imperative.

In 2017, we led a letter to EPA and NHTSA signed by more than 700 medical and health professionals from across the nation urging both agencies to implement strong state and federal advanced clean car regulations to protect public health. We hear often from physicians and nurses who say that they're seeing the impacts of climate change on their patients – like a child who had to stop playing sports due to the threat of asthma attacks from summer ozone pollution, or the person whose heart attack was made more likely by particle pollution exposure from wildfires. The letter from health professionals said, "California's vehicle program is a clean air success story that has advanced clean technologies in the United States and around the world. California standards continue to bring real clean air benefits not only to California residents, but to all Americans."

In 2018, as my colleague at the American Thoracic Society mentioned, we joined more than 90 national, state and local health and medical organizations in commenting against the SAFE rule rollback. The groups signing represent 33 states and territories, from Maine to Mississippi, Michigan to Puerto Rico, Iowa to Texas. Our comments said, "The proposal to revoke

California's waiver and preempt states' rights represents an unjustifiable departure from the effective historical state federal collaborative approach to protecting public health."

Now we're calling on EPA to not only restore California's authority to set stronger vehicle emissions standards to protect its residents' health, but also to set stronger federal standards to drive the transition to zero-emission vehicles nationwide.

Just last month, the Lung Association and 13 other national health and medical organizations sent a letter to President Biden calling on him to set the strongest possible emissions standards to protect public health. Signers included some of the orgs represented by my colleagues here today as well as the American Public Health Association, National Association of County & City Health Officials, and American Psychological Association. We called on the administration to act urgently to ensure the same or better greenhouse gas emissions reductions scheduled to be achieved under the Obama-era standards, and then set stronger standards through at least model year 2030.

Climate change is a health emergency, but also a health opportunity. The nation urgently needs to reduce greenhouse gases from transportation to avoid the worst health impacts of climate change. But a nationwide transition to zero-emission vehicles has the potential to provide immediate benefits to health and equity.

Restoring California's authority to set strong standards to reduce this pollution is an investment in a healthier future for kids nationwide.